

thereupon retire beyond the confines of our intelligence, disdaining to stay and make an abode in common forms of language. And it would be found that these phrases, as it is within our familiar experience that all phrases consisting of only common words, and having no relation to art or science, can be exchanged for several different combinations of words, without materially altering the thought or lengthening the expression. Make the experiment on any paragraph written in the manner in question, on any religious topic whatever, and see whether you cannot melt all the uncouth constructions of diction, to be cast in a new and uncanonical shape, without letting any sense there was in them evaporate. I conclude then, that what I have described as the first part of the theological dialect, the peculiar mode of using common words, is not absolutely necessary as a vehicle of Christian truths.

The second part of the dialect consists, not in a peculiar mode of using common words, but in a class of words peculiar in themselves, as being seldom used except by divines, but of which the meaning can be expressed, without definition or circumlocution, by other single terms which are in general use. For example, edification, tribulation, blessedness, godliness, righteousness, -carnality, lusts (a term peculiar and theological only in the plural), could be exchanged for parallel terms too obvious to need mentioning. It is true indeed that there are very few terms, if any, perfectly synonymous. But when there are several words of very similar though not exactly the same signification, and none of them belong to an art or science, the one which is selected is far more frequently used in that *general* meaning by which it is merely equivalent to the others, than in that precise shade of meaning by which it is distinguished from them. The words instruction, improvement, for instance, may not express exactly the sense of edification; but the word edification is probably not often used by a writer or speaker with any recollection of that peculiarity of its meaning by which it differs from improvement or instruction. This is still more true of some other words, as, for example, tribulation and affliction. Whatever small difference of import these words may have in virtue of derivation, it is probable that no man ever wrote tribulation rather than affliction *on account* of such difference. If, in addi-